

Alma Zevi is pleased to present *Heidi Bucher: Sublime Geometry*, the first solo exhibition of the Swiss artist in Italy. Heidi Bucher (b. 1926 Winterthur, Switzerland; d. 1993, Brunnen, Switzerland) attended the School of Applied Arts in Zurich (1942-1946) and worked extensively in the U.S. and Switzerland throughout her career. In 2017, her work was included in the 57th Venice Biennale, Italy, *Viva Arte Viva*, curated by Christine Macel. Contemporaneously, Alma Zevi organized *FLOORS*, an exhibition which paired Bucher's work with seminal photography by Gordon Matta-Clark.

*Heidi Bucher: Sublime Geometry* charts the artist's radical explorations of architectural and domestic spaces, whilst placing her in dialogue with Minimalism in the mid-20th century. Bucher spent her most formative years in California and New York in the 1960s and early 1970s, although did not align herself with any specific artistic movement. The exhibition analyses Bucher's subversive relationship with Minimalism, as seen in the language employed by artists such as Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, and Agnes Martin. Bucher 'broke' the framework of the Minimalism – and the grid - by explicitly inserting her own presence, such as fingerprints and performative elements, within her work. The Minimalist aesthetic required artists to respect rigidity and straightness of line, resulting in beautiful, but severe and anonymous compositions. This austere simplicity is reflected in the strict geometric forms that lie within many of Bucher's works, the most iconic of which are her 'skinnings.' To construct these, Bucher used latex to cast architectural surfaces, before peeling them off and exhibiting them as works of art. The skinning technique is exemplified by works in the exhibition such as the tiled floors and walls of Bucher's studio in Zurich: the *Borg* series (1975-1977). They defy categorisation; imbued with memory, Bucher's works evoke an inherent temporality.

The earliest work in the exhibition is a silk collage *Untitled* (1954), demonstrating that even as an emerging artist, Bucher had a nascent interest in abstract form. The exhibited 'skinnings' and 'embalming' of the 1970s and 1980s can be interpreted as an evolution from these early collages. The works on display in the gallery are layered and inherently three-dimensional, as illustrated by the quilt pieces (1979). Additionally, the parquet floor pieces (45 Der Parketthoden des Herrenzimmer in Wülflingen, Winterthur, 1979) are extracted from both Bucher's parents' and her ancestors' houses; thus evoking a spectral presence. Whilst they capture this ethereality, they also demand a close formal inspection. The motif of the vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines merge into the intentionally textured and wavering edges of Bucher's pieces.

Exhibited for the first time are drawings relating to an unrealised project for the 1990 Venice Biennale. Executed in 1989, *Bienal Venedig and Venedig* portray three architectural structures

placed in a delineated space. These works on paper relate to one of Bucher's major late works: *Flying Skinroom* (1988). The skinned room undergoes a decontextualisation from its origin, allowing it to shed its past. Bucher's work presents a dichotomy between her formalist aesthetic and a potent psychological effect; where precise line meets with memory and displacement. Domestic objects, such as quilts, are transformed into geometrical sculptural forms. The skinned parquet floors and tiled walls reveal the underlying symmetry and concentric order of patterns that occupy the everyday.

Solo institutional exhibitions of Bucher's work have been organized by Parasol Unit Foundation, London (2018); Swiss Institute of Contemporary Art, New York (2014); Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris (2013); Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (2004); Kunstmuseum Thurgau, Warth (1993); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (1972); Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montréal (1971); and Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York (1971) among others.

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